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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses six roles which an adult education agency can fill in an Educational Priority Area and illustrates each one with examples from the Liverpool E.P.A. Project. These roles are: (1) adult education cum community development; (2) adult education as a resource in community development work; (3) adult education as an aid to parents and schools; (4) adult education as a forum for discussing personal, moral, and social problems; (5) adult education as an extension of recreation and entertainment; (6) adult education as a counseling service for individuals and groups. They are discussed in detail in order to emphasize the interrelationship of the various roles and their total contribution to the process of community development in an underprivileged community. (CL)

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COMMUNITY ADULT EDUCATION

EVIDENCE SUBMITTED TO THE RUSSELL COMMITTEE ON ADULT EDUCATION

IN ENGLAND AND WALES BY

THE WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION (WEST LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE DISTRICT) AND THE LIVERPOOL EDUCATIONAL PRIORITY AREA ACTION/RESEARCH PROJECT

(PUBLISHED IN AN ABRIDGED FORM IN "STUDIES IN ADULT EDUCATION" VOL.3 NO.1. APRIL, 1971)

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In a recent editorial on Adult Education in the Times Educational Supplement, (1) the hope was expressed that the Russell Committee would suggest ways of redistributing resources in Adult Education so that the underprivileged got a bigger slice, and developing new kinds of courses to meet their needs. Mention was made of the work I have undertaken for the W.E.A. here in Liverpool under the auspices of the Liverpool E.P.A. where, during the past fourteen months, I have been developing new methods and techniques for involving the working class communities in Central Liverpool in some form of adult education.

My work to date has convinced me that there is a huge need and potential for adult education provision which can be tapped if the adult education movement in this country is prepared to remove its shackles and adopt a radically new approach. Numerous articles have appeared in recent years urging the responsible bodies to adopt such a radical approach to the problem of adult education for the working class. Unfortunately, most of it has been of a theoretical nature concerned very much with the "why" aspect of the problem rather than more practical issues like <u>how</u> to solve the problem and what methods to use.

I suppose this is hardly surprising when it is realised that my appointment is regarded as a pioneering one in this field. It is the first time anyone has been given specific responsibility for developing work of this nature. Yet at the same time it would appear that so much "talking round the problem" indicates a certain amount of unease amongst those involved in adult education at the prospect of breaking old moulds. New approaches, radical approaches to any problem inevitably involve the organisations responsible in fundamental questions to do with purpose, values, methods and structure. Not surprisingly many draw back from the brink. Yet if the adult education movement in this country - and especially bodies like the W.E.A. is sincere in its commitment then such changes cannot be avoided. (2)

It is the purpose of this paper to spell out what these changes may mean based on my practical experience in the field. I am very much aware that I write in something of an academic vacuum since so little fundamental research has been undertaken into the problem I have been exploring. However, as a member of the Liverpool E.P.A. team my methods are those of an action/research team, using practical work based on past experience, and research in related fields (3) to draw the threads together and postulate some general theory on the role of adult education in underprivileged communities.

The title of this article indicates the direction in which my experience in Liverpool has led me - Community 'Adult' Education. Not 'adult'education and/or for working class communities', nor, 'adult education and community development'. The distinction is important because:-
a) It is necessary to distinguish my work from that of community development which can, in some respects, be seen as a form of informal adult education (4). This is <u>not</u> to say that adult education in this field cannot on occasions border on community development but it must be emphasised that the one is not the other.

(b) At the same time it is necessary to avoid the commonly accepted definition of adult education as something apart from the total community concerned solely with adults and with "classes" and "discussions".

My experience in the E.P.A. has convinced me that adult education must be seen as an integral part of a whole series of community based activities concerned with the total community, sponsored by government, the local authority, voluntary agencies, churches, residents. Again this is not to say that it is indistinguishable from these other activities. But, in order to succeed, it must work closely with them. This often means adopting a very flexible approach which will lead the adult educationalist into a number of different but related roles.

Some will be similar to that of the community worker but with a bias in terms of the education of adults, others quite specifically adult education but concerned primarily with social change, in a practical sense or with the discussion of personal problems and personal relationships. Certain roles will have to do with the problems of parents and children either in terms of the relationship between the parents and the schools or with the provision of amenities for children in the community. Another role can be that of catering for existing interests and extending the concept "entertainment". Finally some roles will be concerned with offering advice and assistance of an educational nature to individuals and groups.

Some of these roles, like the discussion of personal problems and personal relationships could be quite easily adopted to middle class circumstances, others like those concerned with community action may not be necessary in solid working class communities. However, in E.P.A's, and similar areas of social and economic deprivation, the various roles I have mentioned are inevitably interwoven. One tends often to lead to the other and it is not only impossible, but self defeating, to confine activities to any one role or to try and stop one activity becoming another. Yet it is necessary to clarify each role to illustrate its adult education component and to make the case for the involvement of an adult education agency rather than a number of different agencies each on occasions adopting adult education techniques. For this reason I propose to list six roles which an adult education agency can fill in an E.P.A. and to illustrate each one with examples from my work in Liverpool.

The six roles which adult education can undertake can be broken down as follows :-

(1) Adult education cum Community Development.

(2) Adult Education as a resource in Community Development work.

(3) Adult Education as an aid to parents and schools.

(4) Adult Education as a forum for discussing personal, moral, social problems.

(5) Adult Education as an extension of recreation and entertainment.

(6) Adult Education as a councilling service for individuals and groups.

ADULT EDUCATION CUM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development or community action is the only practical course which an adult educationalist can adopt in certain situations when working with some communities in an E.P.A. He should be prepared to see, and if necessary encourage, other slightly more traditional adult educational situations to develop in this direction if the participants show some desire or interest to move from the theoretical to the practical. Sometimes the practical can lead on to a slightly more formal type of adult education and vice versa. On other occasions the process can go through three stages, i.e. discussion, practice, discussion.

An example of this is my work with residents in the Salisbury Centre.(5) Here I encouraged the residents to make use of a disused Handicraft Centre as a meeting place for informal discussions. They saw the possibilities of the building as a Youth and Community Centre and succeeded in convincing the Local Authority that they should be given the lease. This took place over a period of nine months during which time the residents concerned organised a committee to look after their affairs, meet local councillors to discuss their problems and catered for the young people in the area. Here was an example of learning through doing, acquiring new skills and knowledge. Similar in some respects to community development work yet with the emphasis very much on the whole situation as an exercise in adult learning.

Now the residents are keen to provide some form of adult education in the centre and they look to me to do the providing. An application has been made for £5,000. from the Urban Aid programme and the hope is that the building will become a fully equipped community and youth centre with an adult education bias. I have the support of the residents in this venture, unlike some other centres where the local residents tend to shun activities run by the Local Authority because they see it as another middle class institution run by "them" for "us".

Another example of a learning through doing situation is the Shelter Neighbourhood Action Plan in the Granby area of Liverpool 8. Here the residents were assisted by the S.N.A.P. team in setting up "task forces" to discuss <u>their</u> solutions to a wide variety of problems to do with education, housing traffic, etc. The task forces met Corporation officils and other outside experts so that they could have their views on the problem they were exploring. This was not a simulated situation. The S.N.A.P. team were intent on getting the residents to make use of the provisions of the 1969 Housing Act to renovate their properties and to pressurise the Corporation into making the whole area a general improvement area with the subsequent inflow of Local Authority Finance. In the event they succeed.

I was responsible for setting up the participation structure, liaison with the various task forces and translating complicated town planning jargon into layman's language. This was a different situation from that in Salisbury Street. Another body, i.e. a voluntary agency concerned with housing, was responsible for the initiative in encouraging the residents to take some practical steps towards solving their problems. I was a member of that team, helping in a practical way by offering the advice and assistance of one who saw the project as exercise in adult learning with all the attendant

difficulties and problems not so clear to those with a background in town planning. Nothing formal could take place because the residents were involved in a great deal of practical work so I had to skip from meeting to meeting, task force to task force, offering advice and assistance when I thought it was needed. With the extension of the S.N.A.P. programme into a much wider area I am hopeful that if task forces are set up again then each one will have its own "tutor" acting as adviser and assistant. Certainly I would hope that in exercises of a similar nature adult educationalists would be brought in at the very early stages so that use can be made of their expertise. I believe that my activities in S.N.A.P. have convinced many people working in this type of work that the adult educationalist has something valuable to contribute.

In this field of adult education cum community development I have two other exercises planned. One is an attempt to help a group of mothers to set up a claimants union. Originally we meet as an informal discussion group linked to a bingo session. However, I soon discovered that most of the mothers were either separated or divorced and claiming some sort of welfare benefit. They spent a lot of time talking about the problems associated with claiming benefits and asking for my views and assistance. From these discussions arose the suggestion to form a branch of the claimants union. The other is to do with helping local residents establish a credit union, i.e. pooling their financial resources and thus making it possible to lend money and avoid the moneylender or high H.P. charges .(6)

I decided on this course of action after attempts to interest residents in discussions on "How to make the best use of your money" and "Your Rights". Both I now realise were too theoretical, even though at the time many professionals thought such practical subjects would stimulate a great deal of interest. The point I want to make is that when people are suffering from certain disadvantages, like shortage of money or managing a family without a father on supplementary benefits they, naturally, would rather somebody helped them do something practical about it than just discuss the problem. Such exercises can be exciting experiments in adult education with people learning to deal with real, immediate problems in a practical way, picking up essential skills and items of information.

This is adult education cum community development. Community workers, because of other duties, do not have the time to offer more than summary assistance. An adult educationalist can offer specialist assistance in detail and over a long period of time, if he is given a wide degree of flexibility in his approach to what can be regarded as an educational situation. To seek a formal structure and treat such groups as "classes" is to impose middle class standards in working class situations and in most instances, at least in E.P.A's, such efforts will lead to failure and alienation.

ADULT EDUCATION AS A RESOURCE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The distinction between adult education as a resource for community development and adult education cum community development is a difficult though necessary one to make. For instance the S.N.A.P. exercise described above could be seen as an example of adult education as a resource. However, my reason for including it under the heading of adult education cum community development is the degree of involvement with residents in a range of activities directed towards a particular objective. As I stressed earlier in such

situations it is not possible nor advisable to restrict ones role to narrowly defined educational activities. Such involvement can lead to more formal educational activities at a later stage.

For instance when the task forces in S.N.A.P. completed their task and combined into a S.N.A.P.residents group I was able to offer my services as adult educationalist when they wanted advice on how best to tackle the Director of Housing. We spent two meetings discussing what points to raise, how to raise them and who was to raise them. My involvement in the earlier stages of the project made my acceptance by the residents at this stage relatively easy. I was able to point to certain deficiencies in their approach based on shared experience and knowledge. My hope is that at a future stage the residents will become involved in a series of discussions on the practical problems of running a committee. At the moment they are not ready to participate in something which they regard as too formal and fear will only institutionalise the relaxed informal structure they have developed.

However, with another residents group, which has been functioning for some time, I have been able to organise a short course on committee procedure and, after setting up a successful series of discussions for residents operating an advice centre, I have been asked to do the same for those working in another advice centre. I am also involved in discussions with youth leaders in the area on the organisation of a training course for local residents who are helping in various youth clubs and centres.

Much of this type of work depends on the ability to recognise the occasion when adult education can be of assistance. Most residents groups don't realise that many of their problems are in fact educational and that education assistance is something they can call upon. It is necessary, therefore to attend various meetings of residents to make oneself known and accepted so that when the occasion arises such assistance can be offered. For instance, at a recent meeting of a local community council, a local government publication was referred to by the chairman. I was able to convince the residents that it would be profitable to set up a sub-committee to have a look at the document with my assistance - and then to offer their views to the local authority.

If adult education is to be recognised as a resource which community groups can call upon then it is necessary to attend a great many such meetings and establish a network of contacts in the community. Even then it will be some time before people begin to think of <u>asking</u> for assistance when the occasion arises - in my case this is just beginning to happen after fourteen months work getting to know the numerous groups operating in the area. When assistance is offered - or asked for - it may well be for one or two meetings as in the example I quoted. On most occasions it is necessary to emphasise the informality of the whole process. Thus, instead of a tutor leading a group the tutor becomes a member of the group with something special to contribute - in this case the ability to help residents understand and appreciate a complicated document and assist them in formulating their views.

My experience to date leads me to believe that it is not yet possible to think in terms of training courses similar to those offered to shop stewards. There are similarities in the work of community groups and trade unionists. Both are involved in a process of learning through action and thus motivated to seek ways and means of becoming more efficient. In the case of shop stewards

this makes it easier to convince them of the importance of adult education. However, shop stewards belong to well organised, highly motivated organisations with decades of experience behind them. With community groups there is no such history of experience or organisation. The process is only just beginning, and amongst a section of the population not noted for its qualities of leadership, i.e. the unskilled and semi-skilled working class.

In Liverpool this section of the working class has borne the brunt of the redevelopment process and it has added to their list of misfortunes by disrupting community life. Thus in the Liverpool E.P.A. there are no working class "communities" in the old sense of the word but individuals seeking to come to terms with a new environment. In such a situation community groups serve not just as organisations to voice residents' complaints but as a social binding force. The act of coming together is itself a step forward in engendering a new sense of community. In such a situation formal "courses" are impractical and self defeating. This is not to say that such courses will not be accepted at a later stage in the development of community groups.

ADULT EDUCATION AS AN AID TO PARENTS AND SCHOOLS.

When I first took up this post it was felt that this could be the most profitable field of development for adult education. Plowden had emphasised the importance of parental interest in the child's development at school and my secondment to the Liverpool E.P.A. was seen as an opportunity to follow up the Plowden recommendations on home school links and involvement of parents in the educational process. This has not proved easy.

So far, I have had only partial success in encouraging parents to take part in discussions about their children's education. OneResidents' Association did begin a series of informal discussions on "children and their education" designed to inform parents of the changes now taking place in the school curriculum and methods. However, they found it too formal and it became instead a discussion group on topics of general interest.

Another group is being formed but it is likely to go the way of the others. At one school I did succeed in getting some mothers to agree to a joint project with the children on the history of the district but it fell through due to lack of support. It is difficult to account for this 'apparent' lack of interest but I believe there are a number of possible explanations :-

(i) The process of explaining modern maths etc. to parents repeats the mistake made with the children, i.e. using a middle class technique to help solve a working class problem. Professor Bernstein in a recent lecture in Liverpool (7) made this very point and expressed his pessimism about such methods in enlisting parental support. My experience in Liverpool would lead me to agree with him.

(ii) The situation in the Liverpool E.P.A. is such that what concerns parents most is the lack of play facilities for children. Hence they are often full of praise for the schools but critical of the Local Authority for its shortsightedness in not making more provision for children after school hours and during the holidays. This is a pressing problem for many families in the area especially since it would appear

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that the break up of the older communities has destroyed the ability of children to organise their own play in the streets. Street games in working class communities meant that children were occupied without parental involvement. Parents did not need to think of how they could provide for their children's leisure hours - the street provided for them.

Today it is necessary to think of what to do for the children and many community groups in Liverpool have sprung up because of an interest in solving this particular problem. Thus, I found myself during the summer of 1970 organising a Summer play scheme with the emphasis on parental involvement.(8) I enlisted the support of some students from a local College of Education and filled the centre with a wide range of educational toys and games. The idea was to interest the parents in the sort of activities which would be of educational benefit to their children. In the event I was only partially successful, mainly because many of the children really needed an energetic outlet for their energies and their activities disturbed those who took an interest in the games. However, with my encouragement the parents did organise a series of 'bus trips to places of interest as well as teaching the children how to swim and organising a football competition, the first time parents in the area had organised anything of this nature.

If parental interest in education is to be successfully tackled, it must, in the circumstances prevailing in an E.P.A. be on the parents terms and in many instances this will involve work of the nature I have described. This is not just community work or youth work. It is a means whereby parents can be involved in their children's education and it offers the adult educationalist an opportunity to explore new methods and techniques suitable to this sort of work. However, I must emphasise again that I am speaking of an E.P.A. and that in more "respectable" working class communities it may be possible to run a "course" on the problems connected with children's education. Personally I feel that this would best be done by the schools or in the schools using the same discovery techniques employed with the children.

If parents in an E.P.A. are to take a more formally active interest in education then I believe it is necessary to get parents to discuss what the educational system is about. What is education for? What sort of education do their children receive? What does it equip them for? Is there the possibility of another criterion for judging educational competence? What part can they play in such a dialogue? Of course these are very abstract questions but I hope that two projects I have in hand may wed the need for practical work with the possibility of a discussion of certain concepts to do with education. They are :-

(i) In co-operation with the Gt. Georges Community Arts Centre I am producing an"E.P.A. Show" using the game playing techniques developed by Gt. Georges. The Centre is concerned to extend into the higher education and adult education fields something of that game playing - that synthesis of education, enjoyment, discovery and creativity - which has already been achieved in some of our primary schools. The aim is to promote increased awareness of social problems and to encourage discussion, often between professionals in the social service field and the people they are trying to help. The centre has already gained some considerable experience in this type of work and it is hoped to use this experience in a"show" aimed at parents and concerned with

the problem of education in an E.P.A.

It will be an exercise bringing together a number of bodies engaged in educational and community work in Liverpool, i.e. the E.P.A. Project, the W.E.A. the Vauxhall Community Development Project and the Gt. Georges Community Arts Centre. If the show succeeds in stimulating discussion on the points raised above then it will have succeeded in its objective. However, it is hoped that ways and means can be found to make use of the game playing technique in more normal adult education situations.

(ii) The use of the kit on education supplied by the Humanities Curriculum Project for senior pupils in secondary modern schools.(10) This material provides the sort of evidence and stimulus which I feel can be used with some of the groups already operating in the E.P.A. Discussion can often become disoriented even with a good tutor. There is a need to introduce the concept of "evidence" as the occasion arises. Whereas, the teacher often has his basic textbook what is needed in an E.P.A. is material which can be handed out to the parents and is easily assimilated. This the kit on education provides, i.e. extracts from newspapers, books, poems, songs, tape recordings, film material, photographs.

These two projects may well prove to be the most exciting and valuable experiments to be carried out in the field of home-school education in the E.P.A.

ADULT EDUCATION AS A FORUM FOR DISCUSSING PERSONAL, MORAL, SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

This aspect of community adult education in the Liverpool E.P.A. has proved extremely successful, especially with women. For example a group of young mothers undertook a series of discussions under my direction on "The Community and the Outsider" - the object of which was to examine the role of the various groups regarded as being outside the community, e.g. drug addicts, alcoholics etc. With other groups I drew up a list of topics - talking points for adults - based on the sort of problems often discussed in the national press and T.V. e.g. abortion, teenagers, hanging, divorce, permissive society, immigration, etc. The group then choose six or seven topics. Not surprisingly most of the groups choose subjects of personal concern, i.e. abortion, permissiveness, divorce and with the help of some films, lively discussions ensued. The discussions were in most instances seen as an extension of the social activities of the group so that one week they had bingo another week a discussion. Sometimes the two were married together in the same session.

Informality is the keynote. In one group held in a local school - during school hours - the mothers bring their younger children! The success of these discussions bears out the point made by the Marriage Guidance Council in its evidence to the Russell Committee,(11) i.e. that there is a real need for a forum to enable adults to discuss their problems, fears, anxieties, in a society where values are changing and most institutions are undergoing a period of sea change.

I hope to develop this work in the new year and have already had discussions with the Liverpool Marriage Guidance Council with a view to using some of their councillors. I am also engaged in writing a number of scripts for

Radio Merseyside on the general theme of "You and Authority". The purpose of these fifteen minute programmes is to have a look at the institutions which at one time gave a certain sense of stability to working class communities, i.e. the family, the neighbourhood, the Church, the school. The problems of underprivileged communites are accentuated because these institutions are no longer the anchor points they were in the past. The programmes are intended as a stimulus for discussion groups in the E.P.A. The emphasis will thus be in creating programmes which will avoid too much talk and emphasise drama. Thus the first programme on "The Family" will open with a dramatic recreation of family life two or three generations ago and then go on to collect views and opinions from some families in Liverpool. I also hope to use the material from the Humanities Curriculum Project on "Personal Relationships" and "The Family".

The points I would like to emphasise about these groups are :-

(i) They responded positively to my suggestions because I emphasised its informality and tie up with existing social activities.

(ii) The educational element was not over-stressed. My experience has shown that this is often a deterrent.

(iii) The personal relationship between "tutor" and "class" is extremely important. The ability to get on with people, to communicate on a personal level is essential.

(iv) Tutors must be willing to become involved in other activities connected with the group, e.g. helping with a Christmas pantomime or organising a bazaar. As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper tutors must accept that one activity will flow into another and be prepared to adjust to their new role.

ADULT EDUCATION AS AN EXTENSION OF RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

Two points I would like to make about this aspect of community adult education :-

(i) Adult education has - it would appear - an image of seriousness for many working class adults which is at variance with their time life style with its emphasis on informality and enjoyment. I mentioned this point earlier in discussing training programmes for residents associations. Many such associations fear that training programmes will make the work of the group too formal and less "enjoyable" and that the officers will take their role too seriously. The same point was made in discussing the work of the mothers' groups.

With this in mind I decided to take adult education into the social focal point of working class community, i.e. the local pub. I used a "Sunday Mirror" type approach, emphasising the sensational aspects of the themes chosen for discussion. In fact going on the assumption that there is a general interest amongst working class communities in many of the articles serialised in the popular press I ran a series of talks on subjects like - "Naked Apes" - "Witchcraft", "Life on the Planets" "The Permissive Society". **10**

The discussions took place in the public bar - not in a side room - for it was my intention to attract people to the discussions, hoping they would accept such an activity as they accept the T.V. or a musical group, something which they can take part in if they so wish.

In the event the series of discussions proved extremely successful. People were at first hesitant to join in and some were only prepared to listen from a distance but, as the course continued, more and more people took an active part in the discussions. I acted as chairman and I found it was necessary to interpret many of the things said by the speakers and also to reframe many of the questions for the audience. It illustrated some of Bernstein's findings about language codes and the problem of communication between cultural groups. The barrier is not that difficult to cross, however, when a university professor can talk to local residents about evolution!

However, although the emphasis was on enjoyment we did move purposely towards a discussion of local problems when a young minister gave a talk on the problems of American cities. It was relatively easy to draw parallels between the problems of cities in the U.S. and the problems facing Liverpool. This gave rise to a great deal of debate on community involvement and many heard for the first time of the local community council and its work. Thus it was possible to move from a situation where the emphasis was on a general interest to one of immediate concern without giving the impression that people were involved in the "serious" business of education.

(ii) The distinction between liberal education, vocational education and recreational education, is neither possible nor advisable in an E.P.A. The distinction is itself a false one. One man's recreation can be another man's vocation. Recreation can be both "liberal" and "vocational" depending upon th method and approach. I mention this because in a house to house survey of one small section of the Liverpool E.P.A. we found that some 20% of those interviewed - mainly women - expressed an interest in such activities as hairdressing, keep fit, dressmaking. This is an area served by a local authority community centre offering these very activities!

What were we to do? Ignore the obvious demand because we were only concerned with "liberal education", or attempt to cater for it in the locale, in an informal manner. We decided to take the latter course, booked a local Church hall and invited all those who expressed an interest to a meeting to organise the activities they wanted. In the event about half of those who expressed an interest turned up and we were able to set up classes in hairdressing, keep fit and dressmaking using volunteers from the local colleges of physical education and domestic science.

At the same time we are using these activities to stimulate interest in other subjects by having a tutor in charge with responsibility for initiating discussions on topics of interest. This in fact has proved very successful.

However, it needs to be stressed that :-

(a) There is quite a demand for such recreational activities throughout the E.P.A. notwithstanding the fact that they are offered by Colleges of Further Education, often situated in the heart of working class areas.

(b) In areas of economic and social deprivation involvement in such activities can be of great assistance - psychologically - in helping mothers to cope with the numerous problems facing them daily. It is no accident that in such areas it is noticeable how young mothers "go to seed". A new hairdo, a keep fit class can act as a marvellous fill-up to the personality in such circumstances - thus the link in such work with the whole pattern of community development.

Because of the success of this type of work - i.e. in the pubs and in providing for the recreational interests of mothers, I have undertaken another survey in the Everton district of Liverpool with the assistance of Diploma students from the Liverpool University Institute of Extension Studies. However, instead of interviewing households as we did in the Earle Road area this exercise will be concerned with pin-pointing all the social recreational, religious groups which exist in the district. We then hope to discover how their social and educational needs are being met and to what extent we can offer assistance either by the use of our own resources or those of the other educational organisations. This survey is being undertaken in close co-operation with the local community development officer as the information we seek will be of great benefit to him in establishing links with and within the community and involving various community groups in some form of community action.

ADULT EDUCATION AS A COUNCILLING SERVICE:

In the survey referred to above in the Earle Road area, although the general demand was for activities like hairdressing and keep fit, nevertheless there were a number of scattered individuals who expressed interest in other subjects, e.g. languages, art, G.C.E. courses, typewriting, psychology, politics. This would seem to indicate that despite the publicity given to further education there are a number of people who are either unaware of the educational services available or who lack the necessary know-how to take advantage of them. It can be argued that if people are determined then they will take advantage of existing educational opportunities. Thus, if a person sees the publicity, is initially interested, but does not follow it up then he or she is not really interested. This line of argument ignores the fact that, for many people in the sort of communities I have been dealing with, the whole business of joining a "class" in an institution is a totally new and frightening experience. Help is required, just as help is required when individuals have social problems, or problems to do with claiming welfare benefits.

Thus, in Earle Road we intend following up the survey by offering individual advice and assistance to those who expressed interest in some form of further education outside the generally expressed interests for which we are already catering. In fact, during the past fourteen months, as I have got to know the people in the area and vice-versa and my role has become clearer to them I have acted as counsellor to individuals seeking advice on G.C.E. courses, W.E.A. classes, Extra Mural Classes, entrance to Ruskin and other Adult Colleges. 12

As well as councilling individuals, I now find that as more and more people become aware of my work I am contacted by various community groups and professional workers in the

field for advice and assistance on courses or classes they wish to run. In some instances, I can fill the need using W.E.A. resources, in others I can contact various educational agencies and ask for their assistance. My ability to undertake this service has proved of real benefit to a small band of committed professional and voluntary workers who have been nourishing little social groups for a number of years and undertaking a certain amount of informal adult education.(12) Because of their efforts adult education in the Liverpool E.P.A. was not a completely barren field before I arrived on the scene.

The six roles of an adult educational agency in an underprivileged community, outlined above, have been spelt out in some detail to emphasise :-

(a) The inter-related nature of the various roles, e.g. the work at the Salisbury Centre.

(b) Their total contribution to the process of community development.

Thus when I emphasised the role of adult education in providing an extension of recreation and entertainment in the life of the community I pointed out how this also made a contribution to community change, e.g. pub talks moving towards a discussion of immediate social problems; hairdressing classes helping to boost morale; discussion groups on personal and family problems acting as a sort of group therapy.

It is important to restate that I am concerned here with the adult population in an E.P.A. In such an area the emphasis is on the contribution of education to the total process of social change. In other, more privileged working class communities it may not be necessary to adopt all the roles I have outlined and adult education may assume a more traditional format. This does not mean that my work in the Liverpool E.P.A. is not particularly relevant for more stable working class communities. Certainly, an E.P.A. is at the extreme end of the social scale, nevertheless, it is dangerous to generalise about E.P.A's. For instance, even within the Liverpool Project there are stable working class communities, e.g. the Earle Road area. The fact that in the latter there was a high demand for further education would seem to indicate that in a working class community not beset with the difficulties of an E.P.A. there is an untapped demand for adult education. At the same time it is more than probable that there is an E.P.A. problem in many new housing estates.(13)

However, the nature, number and complexity of the problems facing communities in the inner areas of our large cities makes it necessary for adult education to become closely integrated with other agencies and organisations - thus the concept of community adult education. In such a situation - as I have illustrated - the criterion of success cannot be seen simply in terms of the traditional "class". Certainly informal classes are possible but they are only a small part of the work that an adult education agency can undertake in an E.P.A. In the most important sense the success of adult education will depend on the extent to which it contributes to the process of social change in poor communities. This then raises complex issues, such as how do we determine the rate of social change in such communities and the value and extent of the contribution made by adult education. Since the field work has only just begun here in the Liverpool E.P.A. the question cannot as yet be answered. If it is to be answered in any depth then the

practical work in Liverpool would need to be monitored by a research unit.

In the meantime, the short term immediate criteria for judging the work in Liverpool should not be the traditional middle class adult educational approach. A world authority on adult education, has pointed to the dangers of such an approach in work of this nature (14). Informality and flexibility are the keynotes and at this stage in the work the main criteria for judging the success or otherwise of the methods used here in Liverpool is the fact that people do attend. This may sound like avoiding the question but in a situation where traditional methods have failed to attract working class adults in any numbers to some form of adult education it is an important point to make. Other criteria are possible in the short term, e.g. extension of vocabulary, acquisition of communication skills, increase in sociability, introduction of the notion of cause and effect and the "evidence", and many others.

Such a detailed examination of the work of adult education in underprivileged communities requires resources not yet made available to bodies such as the W.E.A. and the Liverpool E.P.A. Project already working in the field. What is required is a combination of the research and resources put into the Newsom Report and the Humanities Curriculum Project. If the problems of the children of average and below average ability are worth such detailed examination then surely the adult population in the communities to which those children belong are entitled to similar treatment unless they are to be written off as uneducatable - and my findings to date would emphatically reject that analysis.

There is a possibility that, arising from the success of the Liverpool E.P.A. Project, a National Institute of Community Education will be established in Liverpool utilising the personnel and resources of the existing E.P.A. team. Such an Institute would be ideally placed(as an important part of its work,) to concentrate on the various problems of method, technique, criteria raised in this paper.

In terms of the work already evolving in the Liverpool E.P.A. method and technique are of vital importance. This is particularly true of that aspect of the work which I have described where adults are involved in a learning situation dealing with real problems. For instance how can parents and children best learn together in Summer play schemes, pre-school play groups and similar activities? How can residents learn to run youth clubs and summer camps more effectively? What are the best methods for assisting residents in setting up self help organisations like credit unions? In general, how can adults in an E.P.A. take part in a learning situation where the education is not so much <u>for</u> the job as <u>during</u> the job? How best in fact to educate unobtrusively whilst the community seeks to solve its problems in a practical manner. This is the aspect of community adult education which departs most radically from traditional methods and requires the sort of research in depth that could be offered by a National Institute.

The Institute could also serve as a national centre for the training of adult tutors to undertake the sort of work outlined above. The close links with the W.E.A. could be strengthened, with the W.E.A. providing the tutors throughout the country and the National Institute acting as a resources and research centre. Financial Assistance

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from the Government for such an Institute and the W.E.A. would be a big step forward in extending and strengthening nationally the work already undertaken here in Liverpool and a major contribution to research into a much neglected, yet vitally important aspect of further education.

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